

# Department of Conservation and Recreation

## Conservation Planning and Certification

January 31, 2017



# Purpose

- Conservation plans are required to implement existing Programs
  - State Tax Credit (§ 58.1-339.3 and § 58.1-439.5)
    - soil conservation plan
  - Resource Management Plans (§ 10.1-104.8)
    - soil conservation plan or pasture management plan
  - State Cost Share (VACS BMP Manual)
    - conservation plan
- Virginia-focused planning components and methodologies
- Increased opportunities for planning certification

# Value of Planning

## Producer

- Technical assistance
- Eligibility for VACS, Tax Credit, and RMP participation
- May assist producers with:
  - Chesapeake Bay Act assessment and plan
  - DEQ confined animal permits
  - Agriculture Stewardship Act plans



## Commonwealth

- Water quality improvements
- Nutrient and sediment controls



# Steps So Far

- Initiated development of DCR conservation planning program
- Survey conducted of District staff
- Timeline for development
- Conservation planning and training coordinator position
- New conservation planning function within tracking module
- Integrated mapping

# General Plan Components

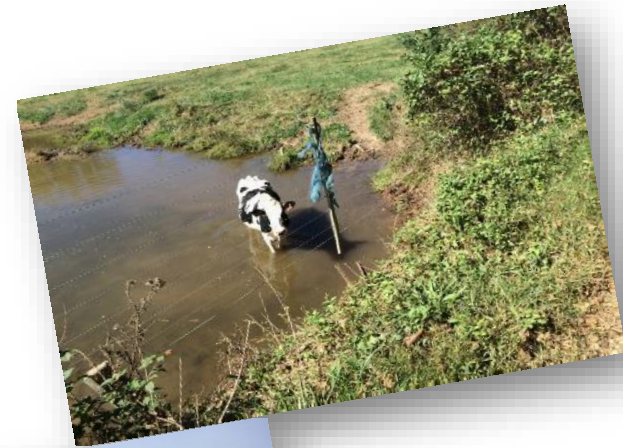
- Narrative
- Site or farm resource assessment
- Conservation planning notes
- Maps
- Supporting documents
- Recommended actions
- Signatures and dates
  - Plan writer
  - Producer or land owner
  - Soil and Water Conservation District Board





# Planning Steps

- Identify problems
- Determine objectives
- Assess resources
- Analyze resource data
- Recommended actions
- Make decisions
- Implement the plan
- Evaluate the plan



# Resource Assessment

- Resources included
  - Soils
  - Water quality
  - Threatened and endangered species
  - Cultural resources
- Resources not included
  - Energy
  - Air
  - Forestry
  - Human



# **DCR Conservation Planning Certification**

- Soil and Water Conservation District staff, private consultants, and DCR staff will be able to become DCR conservation planner certified
- Certification and recertification will be for a period of three years
- DCR will continue to recognize NRCS conservation planning certification



# Conservation Planning Certification Transition

The DCR effective dates and requirements for certification are as listed in the table below.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Action</u>
1. Have never been NRCS conservation planner certified	Must take DCR's required certification coursework (DCR-provided or DCR-approved) and initial plan review/approval requirement.
2. Have taken NRCS required certification courses since January 1, 2013 or are in the process of taking them	Must finish all DCR certification course work, submit a plan for review and approval, and provide a copy of all courses taken and when taken.
3. Currently NRCS-certified or NRCS-certified as of January 1, 2016	Certification will be recognized and given a DCR certification date matching the NRCS certification date.

# What Is Next?

## December 2016

- Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (Board) approves development of Program and establishment of stakeholder group

## January 2017

- Stakeholder group holds first meeting

## May 2017

- Additional guidance and program details brought to Board for approval

# Stakeholder Group Involvement

- Plan component
  - What does each component require?
  - Impact to threatened and endangered species and cultural resources
  - Review of agriculture tracking database module
  - Policy considerations
- Certification and recertification
  - Review of NRCS curriculum
  - Review of survey completed by SWCDs
  - Required coursework
  - CEUs
  - Plan review

# Thank You

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